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LETTER TO HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II FROM THE MARIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Most Holy Father:

Gathered for its thirty-eighth annual convention the Mariological Society of America wishes to take the happy occasion, four days before the opening of the Marian Year, to thank you for your most recent Marian initiatives in the service of the Church.

We thank you for summoning all Christians to a prayerful preparation for the Bimillennial Jubilee of the birth of Jesus Christ by a special Marian Year emphasizing, as you put it, "the unique presence of the Mother of Christ in history, especially during these years leading up to the year 2000."

We thank you for your personal contribution to teaching on Mary in your Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater*, to some of whose inspiring themes we have chosen to give further study in our next convention, held during the Marian Year itself. We ask a remembrance in your prayers that our efforts be worthy of the document that has prompted them.

Elated at the prospect of contributing yet further to the celebration of the Marian Year and end-of-century Jubilee, we are renewed in spirit at recalling that our own Mariological Society owes its origin to the impetus of the Holy Year of 1950.

And as already we read and discuss *Redemptoris Mater* we wish to express our admiration for the harmonious way in which you have presented a masterful summary of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the place of Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church and on her active presence in the life of the Pilgrim Church, all in an encyclical unique for giving voice to your per-

sonal devotion to Mary on its every page. Your interweaving of the pastoral and the scholarly is of special inspiration to us.

As a small token of our appreciation we ask you to accept a copy of *Marian Studies* XXXVII, our convention papers of 1986 dedicated to a commentary on Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, for we could not be more delighted over realizing that, unbeknownst to us, they were in preparation during the time that you yourself were composing in *Redemptoris Mater* your own synthesis of the Council's Marian teaching. This happy coincidence offers us the occasion to pledge anew our loyalty to you especially in your teaching role in the Church.

We wish you in advance a most cordial welcome to our country in September of the Marian Year and assure you that your further words on the Mother of the Redeemer will be treasured by American Catholics conscious that 141 years ago their bishops placed this country under the patronage of Mary Immaculate.

In conclusion we promise you our collective and personal prayers and beg a place for us in your own, through the intercession of the loving Mother of the Redeemer ever present to the Pilgrim Church.

Read and approved at the Convention, June 3, 1987.

Respectfully asking your Apostolic Blessing on our activities during the Marian Year,

Reverend James T. O'Connor
President